

Board of Education Agenda Item

Item: A.

Date: October 26, 2005

Topic: Final Review of a Request for Approval of an Alternative Accreditation Plan from the Hampton City Public Schools for Hampton Harbour Academy

Presenter: Mrs. Kathleen M. Smith, Director of the Office of School Improvement
Dr. Cynthia Cooper, Director of Adult Education, Hampton City Public Schools

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Origin:

☐ Topic presented for information only (no board action required)

☒ Board review required by

☐ State or federal law or regulation

☒ Board of Education regulation

☐ Other: _____

☒ Action requested at this meeting ☐ Action requested at future meeting: _____
(date)

Previous Review/Action:

☐ No previous board review/action

☒ Previous review/action

date July 27, 2005

action _____

Background Information:

The *Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia* adopted by the Board in July 2000, Section 8 VAC 20-131.280.D. of the standards states:

Special purpose schools such as regional, special education, alternative, or career and technical schools that serve as the student's school of principal enrollment shall be evaluated on standards appropriate to the programs offered in the schools and approved by the Board prior to August 1 of the school year for which approval is requested. Any student graduating from a special purpose school with a Standard, Advanced Studies, or Modified Standard Diploma must meet the requirements prescribed in 8 VAC 20-131-50.

Section 22.1-253.13:1.D.8 of the *Standards of Quality* requires local school boards to provide educational alternatives for students whose needs are not met in programs prescribed elsewhere in these standards. Such students shall be counted in average daily membership (ADM) in accordance with the regulations of the Board of Education. Regulations governing programs such as this are found in the accrediting standards, which permit alternative accreditation plans and allow the Board to grant waivers to certain provisions of the standards.

In September 2004, at the board's request, the department developed a template for school divisions to use in preparing alternative accreditation plan proposals. The department also developed criteria for the evaluation of proposals. This request has been reviewed against the evaluation criteria and a copy of the department's review is attached.

Summary of Major Elements:

The school board of Hampton City is proposing an alternative accreditation plan for Hampton Harbour Academy (HHA), an alternative charter school that serves students in grades six through eight who are at least two years behind their grade cohort group. These students have been retained more than once, some students are reading as much as four years behind their chronological age group and are equally behind in mathematics. HHA has been rated Accredited with Warning in 2002-03, 2003-04, and 2004-05.

The intent of HHA, as indicated in Attachment A, is to provide interventions in the core academic areas in order for students to gain skills and content necessary to successfully enter high school and graduate with a standard diploma. The program of instruction will:

- focus instruction in reading, writing, and mathematics;
- offer many opportunities for hands-on and high interest work and vary activities in class to keep students engaged;
- integrate curriculum from elective courses into core academics;
- provide tutoring and intensive intervention to students during the school day;
- incorporate physical education into the day with wellness activities;
- teach science and history social sciences using interdisciplinary project learning;
- provide six hours of instruction per day;
- limit class size to 10 students per class; and
- offer opportunities for career exploration.

Attachment B was submitted to the Board of Education on July 27, 2005, to provide information about the transition of students back to the regular setting.

Hampton Public Schools is requesting that the school be accredited on the following criterion: 70% of the 8th grade students in the program for a full academic year will pass the 8th grade Standards of Learning (SOL) assessments in English, writing and mathematics. Scores on the statewide assessments in 6th and 7th grades will not be used as accreditation measures unless they improve the school's accreditation status.

Hampton Public Schools is requesting waivers to provisions of the *Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia* to allow them to implement the program of instruction as outlined above. Waivers are requested to provisions for instructional programs in middle schools as required in 8 VAC 20-131-90 A-D as follows:

- A. The middle school shall provide each student a program of instruction which corresponds to the Standards of Learning for English, mathematics, science, and history/social science. In addition, each school shall provide instruction in art, music, foreign language, physical education and health, and career and technical exploration.
- B. The middle school shall provide a minimum of eight courses to students in the eighth grade. Courses in English, mathematics, science, and history/social science shall be required. Four elective courses shall be available: level one of a foreign language, one in health and physical education, one in fine arts, and one in career and technical exploration.
- C. Level one of a foreign language shall be available to all eighth grade students. For any high school credit-bearing course taken in middle school, parents may request that grades be omitted from the student's transcript and the student not earn high school credit for the course in accordance with policies adopted by the local school board. Notice of this provision must be provided to parents with a deadline and format for making such a request. Nothing in this chapter shall be construed to prevent a middle school from offering any other credit-bearing courses for graduation.
- D. To provide students a sufficient opportunity to learn, each student shall be provided 140 clock hours per year of instruction in each of the four disciplines of English, math, science, and history/social science. Sixth grade students may receive an alternative schedule of instruction provided each student receives at least 560 total clock hours of instruction in the four academic disciplines.

Superintendent's Recommendation: The Superintendent of Public Instruction recommends that the Board of Education approve the plan and requested waivers for Hampton Harbour Academy for their 2006-2007 accreditation rating based on assessments administered in the 2005-2006 school year with future extensions of the plan contingent upon the submission of an evaluation showing that the stated objectives of the program and proposed evaluative criteria have been met.

Impact on Resources: There is no impact on the resources of the Department of Education.

Timetable for Further Review/Action: Staff of the Department of Education will advise the Hampton City Public Schools of the Board's action.

**COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
BOARD OF EDUCATION
RICHMOND, VIRGINIA**

**REQUEST FOR WAIVER OF CERTAIN ACCREDITING STANDARDS
AND/OR APPROVAL OF AN INNOVATIVE OR EXPERIMENTAL PROGRAM**

Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia, (8 VAC 20-131-10 et. seq.) set the minimum standards public schools must meet to be accredited by the Board of Education. Accreditation of public schools is required by the Standards of Quality (§22.1-253.13:1 et. seq.). The annual accrediting cycle for public schools is July 1 through June 30.

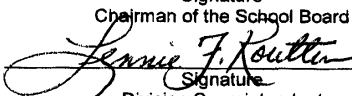
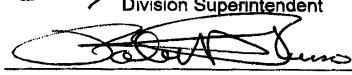
This cover sheet, with the supporting documentation, must be submitted to the Department of Education for review and recommendation to the Board at least 90 days prior to the beginning of an accrediting cycle or the proposed implementation of the program or activity that precipitates the request for the waiver. The types of waivers available and the corresponding section of the standards are indicated below. Please feel free to attach additional sheets or information deemed appropriate.

SCHOOL DIVISION	Hampton City Schools
TITLE OF PROGRAM/ACTIVITY	Hampton Harbour Academy- An Alternative Charter School Serving Grades 6-8

TYPE OF APPROVAL REQUESTED:

- | | |
|--------------|--|
| _____ | Approval of an Alternative to the Standard School Year and School Day (8 VAC 20-131-150) |
| <u> X </u> | Approval of an Alternative Accreditation Plan (8 VAC 20-131-280.D) |
| _____ | Approval of an Experimental Program (8 VAC 20-131-290 D) |
| _____ | Approval of an Innovative Program (8 VAC 20-131-290 D) |
| X | Approval of a Waiver of Other Provision(s) of the Standards (8 VAC 20-131-330) |
| _____ | (Complete Pages 1 and 3 of the application only.) |

SCHOOL(S) INVOLVED IN THE PROPOSED PROGRAM/ACTIVITY	Hampton Harbour Academy
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Date Approved by the Local School Board 10/05/05	Signature Chairman of the School Board 
Submission Date 10/06/05	Signature Division Superintendent 
SCHOOL DIVISION	Hampton City Schools
TITLE OF PROGRAM/ACTIVITY	Hampton Harbour Academy- An Alternative Charter School Serving Grades 6-8

IF YOU ARE SEEKING A WAIVER OF A PROVISION OR PROVISIONS OF THE ACCREDITING STANDARDS, STATE THE PROVISION AND THE RATIONAL FOR SEEKING A WAIVER FOR EACH.

8 VAC 20-131-90. Instructional Program in Middle Schools.

- E. Specifically, "The middle school shall provide a minimum of eight courses to students in the eighth grade. Four elective courses shall be available: level one of a foreign language, one in health and physical education, one in fine arts, and one in career and technical exploration."
- F. Specifically, "Level one of a foreign language shall be available to all eighth grade students."
- G. Specifically, "...each student shall be provided 140 clock hours per year of instruction in... science, and history/social science."

RATIONALE: We request waivers from the above standards due to the special purpose of the school's program and the needs of its students. The middle school program is designed for students already two or more years behind their entry grade cohort group. These students have been retained more than once and often have significant skill deficits in reading (some as much as four years behind their chronological age group) and math. Often, students who read poorly are also behind in other content-based core academic subjects. The program is designed to provide interventions in these core academics in order for students to gain the skills and content necessary to begin recovery of time lost due to retention.

- Waivers from the requirement for discreet elective, foreign language, and physical education/health courses are sought so that instructional time can be dedicated primarily to core academics.
- While the school will not offer discreet courses in art, music and physical education and health, there is value in a well-rounded day with diverse activities for students.
- The school will incorporate physical education into the day with wellness activities such as a walking regimen with distances measured by pedometer and opportunities for recreational activities during the lunch/recess period.
- Due to the lack of discreet elective courses in the program, teachers will vary activities in class and offer many opportunities for hands-on and high interest

work to keep students engaged. They will also integrate curriculum from elective courses into core academics, e.g. budgeting (from Work and Family Studies) in math, and resume writing (from Computer Applications/ Career and Technical Education) in writing.

- Science and history/social science skills will be taught using interdisciplinary project learning and selected readings in core academic classes so that students gain the content and skills necessary for success in high school. Students will engage in career exploration through the use of internet resources and will also take aptitude and interest inventories to be used in planning academic and vocational choices for high school.

DESCRIBE THE PROCEDURES THAT WILL BE USED TO EVALUATE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE WAIVER/PROGRAM/ACTIVITY. (Include information that includes measurable goals, objectives, and student academic achievement that will be expected as a result of the implementation of the program/activity)

PLEASE REFER TO ALTERNATIVE ACCREDITATION PLAN PROPOSAL WHICH FOLLOWS.

Number Of Students Involved In The Program	Middle School- 90 students
What is the anticipated length of the program or duration of the waiver?	September, 2005-June, 2006
SCHOOL DIVISION	Hampton City Schools
TITLE OF PROGRAM/ACTIVITY	Hampton Harbour Academy- An Alternative Charter School

HAMPTON HARBOUR ACADEMY

ALTERNATIVE ACCREDITATION PLAN PROPOSAL

INTRODUCTION

Currently in its fourth year of operation, Hampton Harbour Academy (HHA) is an alternative school in the Hampton school division converted from an alternative program to a charter school in July of 2001. Hampton Harbour Academy meets the state definition of a special purpose school and seeks approval for an alternative accreditation plan as provided in the Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia, Part VIII, Section 8 VAC 20-131-280 D.

INTENT

Hampton Harbour Academy exists to prepare 6th, 7th and 8th grade students who are significantly behind in basic academic skills to successfully enter high school and graduate with a standard diploma.

MISSION

Hampton Harbour Academy will provide quality educational programs to help students who may require a smaller and more supportive learning environment to be successful.

TARGET POPULATION

Hampton Harbour Academy serves middle school students who are two years or more behind their age appropriate cohort group in grade level, e.g. eighth grade students are 15 to 16 years of age and older while typical HCS eighth graders are 13 to 14 years old. Hampton Harbour students most often have skill deficits in reading and math. Standardized test scores on norm referenced tests show them to fall 20-25 percentile points lower than the general HCS student population. As a result, they have experienced school failure and an inability to catch up in the traditional middle school setting. These student characteristics have been influential in our inability to meet the SOL benchmarks to date.

INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM

- The core program of academic instruction will be in reading, writing and mathematics. Students will also receive instruction in organization and study skills as well as ongoing assistance in goal setting and decision- making.
- While core instruction is centered in the three primary areas of reading, writing and mathematics, it will also include the integration of the essential knowledge and skills from science and social studies into the curriculum to prepare students for success in 9th grade. Content specialists are in the process of designating curriculum in science and social studies to be integrated into existing coursework. The content based on the subset of skills students must have for the successful completion of the high school entry level classes-- World Geography

and Earth Science. Instructional strategies and materials will be based on the needs of the students enrolled. Mastery of the material will be measured by benchmark tests constructed from released SOL test items.

- The student day will be six hours in length with one half hour dedicated to lunch and recreation. After-school programs for additional intervention, enrichment, and recreational activities will also be developed for dependent on partnerships with other organizations, e.g. Hampton Department of Parks and Recreation.
- Class size will be limited to 10 students per class, grouped in teams of 30. Each class will be staffed with a licensed teacher with additional services provided by an instructional assistant assigned to each team.
- Elective course material will be integrated into core academics, e.g. budgeting (from Work and Family Studies) in math, and resume writing (from Computer Applications/Career and Technical Education) in writing.
- Opportunities for career exploration will be offered using internet resources and students will take aptitude and interest inventories to be used in planning academic and vocational choices for high school.
- Physical Education will be included in the student day with:
 - A 30 minute period for recess/lunch which will allow students time to walk or engage in recreational activities.
 - A walking regimen that includes the use of pedometers for students to measure distance and time spent walking. These data will be used in mathematics lessons. Calories burned will also be recorded and used to discuss wellness and health issues.

STAFFING:

Hampton Harbour Academy is staffed with a faculty of highly qualified teachers certified to teach the core curriculum proposed. 100% of the faculty is licensed. 91% of the staff is endorsed in the area assigned, with a single teacher teaching out of area. The school has reduced the teacher/pupil ratio to 10:1 and also added a reading coach, instructional assistants and a community involvement facilitator to help students and families solve problems that are barriers to academic achievement.

STUDENT ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION:

Each student will be pre-tested on entry into the program using a minimum of three test batteries to assess functional skill in reading and mathematics. Based on triangulated data from these assessments, students will be grouped for instruction on gender-specific teams and an instructional plan developed. Students will be assessed for progress quarterly, with achievement data tracked and analyzed. When students reach a minimum reading level of 7.4 (7th grade, 4th month) they will be promoted to the 8th grade. Students whose reading level is below 7.4 will be classified as 6th or 7th grade dependent on the last grade completed.

Students will be re-evaluated quarterly, and will be classified as 8th graders once they reach a reading level of 7.4 (7th grade, 4th month). All 8th grade students will participate in end-of-year SOL assessments in the core subjects of reading (RLR), writing, and mathematics regardless of what quarter they attained 8th grade status. No student will be promoted to the 8th grade after the end-of-year SOL assessments.

6th and 7th grade students will participate in required SOL testing in mathematics and Language Arts. Results will be used for the purposes of establishing Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). Additionally, Hampton Harbour Academy will comply with all testing requirements of the federal No Child Left Behind Act.

ACCREDITATION

Student performance measures for accreditation will be the 8th grade end-of-year SOL tests in reading (RLR), writing and mathematics. The performance standard for accreditation will be a 70% pass rate for 8th grade students in the program. Scores on the statewide assessments that are administered in the 6th and 7th grades will not be used as accreditation measures unless they improve the school's accreditation status.

WAIVERS REQUESTED

This intervention program for middle school students will need waivers from the state standards requiring a minimum of eight courses for 8th graders to include discreet elective and physical education courses as well as the requirement for 140 hours of instruction in science and history/social science.

PROGRAM EVALUATION

The efficacy of the instructional program will be evaluated using:

- The progress of the school in meeting accreditation requirements
- The percentage of entering students who successfully progress to the 9th grade
- The percentage of entering students who successfully progress from ungraded to 8th grade status
- The educational gain of students from pre to post test on assessments in reading and mathematics
- The improvement in student attendance rates
- Qualitative evidence of improvement in student attitudes towards school and learning

TRANSITION PLAN

The transition plan for Hampton Harbour students is comprehensive and includes:

- Face to face conferences between the Hampton Harbour counselor and traditional school counselor, including the student and family, of course, to discuss student strengths and weaknesses, scheduling needs, and needs for additional support.
- Written transition plan for each student, spelling out the responsibilities of each party (Hampton Harbour Academy, the zoned school, the student, and the family) to assure that each student is successful in the 9th grade year.
- Alternative administrator on each high school administrative team to monitor the implementation of the plan and to meet informally with the transitioning students throughout the year.
- Follow-up by the Hampton Harbour school counselor who will initiate collaborative conferences for problem solving whenever there is a need.

**Virginia Department of Education
Evaluation Criteria
Hampton Harbour Academy, Hampton City Public Schools
Alternative Accreditation Plans for Special Purpose Schools
(8 VAC 20-131-330)**

Criteria	Yes	No	Limited
School characteristics and instructional program:			
1. The mission, purpose, and target population of the school justify its categorization as a “special purpose” school and, therefore, eligible to request an alternative accreditation plan.	v		
2. The characteristics and special needs of the student population are clearly defined, and the criteria for student placement require parental consultation and agreement.	v		
3. The program of instruction provides all students with opportunities to study a comprehensive curriculum that is customized to support the mission of the school.	v		
4. The school provides transition planning to help students be successful when they return to a regular school setting. Note: Students transition to a diploma or GED not back to a base school.	v		
5. Strategies used to evaluate student progress are aligned to the mission/purpose of the school and include academic achievement measures.	v		
6. Convincing evidence has been provided that students enrolled in the school have not been successful in other schools subject to all the accrediting standards.	v		
7. Students will be taught with highly qualified teachers who meet the Board of Education’s licensure requirements for instructional personnel.	v		
Alternative Accreditation Plan:			
1. Rationale and evidence provide convincing evidence that the “special purpose” nature of the school precludes its being able to reach and maintain full accreditation status as defined in the SOA.	v		
2. Alternative accreditation criteria described in the plan include academic achievement measures that are objective, measurable, and directly related to the mission and purpose of the school.	v		

Criteria	Yes	No	Limited
3. The plan includes use of statewide assessment student achievement results of English and mathematics.	v		
4. The plan meets the testing requirements of the SOA. Note: All students are tested at the completion of the SOL course.	v		
5. The plan meets the testing requirements of NCLB and describes how the school plans to meet “adequate yearly progress” requirements of the federal law.	v		
6. The plan provides convincing evidence that all pre-accreditation eligibility criteria are met for standards in which waivers have not been requested.	v		
7. Waivers have been requested for accrediting standards that are not being met, and the rationale for the waivers are clear and appropriate for the mission/purpose of the school.	v		